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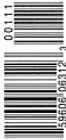
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STEPHEN THE DARK KNIGHT TOWER



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END-WORLD ALMANAC

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END-WORLD ALMANAC

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END-WORLD

Woe unto those who traverse beyond the cursed Borderlands into End-World! 'Tis a twisted and desolate realm where it seems as if the world passed ages ago. From the blasted landscapes of Thunderclap to the frozen heights of Empathica, End-World shows no mercy to unwary young Gunslingers. In a world where information — and a bit of luck — is the key to survival, the End-World Almanac serves as your guide to the Badlands, Le Casse Roi Russe and beyond!





Mid Forest Bog

The Borderlands

Calla Bryn Bouse



Calla Divine



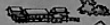
Calla Sen Chre



Calla Boot Hill



Calla Amity



Mann Redpath



Calla Bryn Sturgis



Calla Lockwood



Devar
Toi



Thunderclap
Station

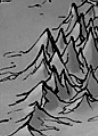


Grand Crescent

Thunderclap

River Whye

Discordi



END-WORLD

azek Lake

's Arse

Castle
Discordia

Castle Town

Casse Roi Russe

Dark
Tower

Can'ka No Rey
(Field of Roses)

Badlands

Casse Roi Russe River

White Lands of
Empathica

ELEPHANT BEAM

BEAR BEAM

HORSE
BEAM

LION BEAM

HARE BEAM

RAT BEAM

BAT BEAM

EAGLE
BEAM

DOG
BEAM

TURTLE
BEAM

WOLF BEAM

FISH BEAM

GUARDIANS OF THE BEAM



There are six Beams emanating from the Dark Tower. These Beams maintain the proper alignment of time, space, size and dimension in all of the worlds. The six Beams also connect the twelve Portals-between-worlds which exist at the Earth's edge. Each of these Portals is protected by an animal Totem, or Guardian.

Since time immemorial it has been the goal of the Crimson King and other followers of the Outer Dark to destroy the Beams and the Guardians that watch over their termination points. By destroying Beams and Guardians these Warriors of the Scarlet Eye hope to topple the Dark Tower and return all of existence to the undifferentiated, chaotic magic of the Prim. Although the Beams are durable and bend before breaking, many have begun to corrode.

As the Beams gradually weaken, the glue that holds the worlds together slowly stretches and the worlds themselves begin to sag. Those places in which the fabric of existence has almost entirely worn away are known as thinnies. Like the stone circles erected by the ancient Druids of Mid-World, these thinnies act as minor portals through which demonic entities can enter Mid-World. The effect that these minor portals have upon the Guardians, and the major Portals they oversee, is not known. However it is prophesied that when all of the Beams crumble and the last of the Guardians dies, that the Dark Tower will fall, creation will end, and the very Eye of Existence will turn blind. While the majority of Beams have withstood most damage inflicted upon them to date, intelligence indicates that the Crimson King's scientists are feverishly searching for new methods to weaken the Beams more efficiently.

The Twelve Guardians, then, are instrumental to the very survival of the multiverse. Perhaps the most revered of the Guardians is Maturin the Turtle. Known in folklore as the "Great Turtle Upon Whose Shell the World Rests," legend has it that it was Maturin who caught the world upon his back shortly after it was created by Gan. Had Maturin not been there, all of Existence would have fallen into oblivion. Although he is generally believed to be of slow thought, Maturin is

nonetheless regarded as being benevolent and is often invoked in song and prayer. Maturin is paired with his fellow Guardian, Shardik the Bear.

Another highly-honored Guardian is Chuchundra the Rat, who is paired with Jasconius the Fish. Worshipped primarily by the Nordite peoples of Northern In-World, legend has it that Chuchundra brought the first barley seeds to the Nordites and taught them how to cultivate the cereal grain. Prior to this time, the Nordites relied on reindeer and fish as their primary forms of sustenance; thus, they were forced to lead harsh, nomadic lifestyles dictated by annual reindeer migratory patterns. Thanks to Chuchundra, the ancient Nordites became much less dependent on reindeer hunting and were able to settle in permanent villages based around their barley fields. Chuchundra is therefore considered by many Nordite *noaidis* to be the "Father of Civilization." Among all Mid-Worlders, Chuchundra is generally honored for his quick wits and his tendency to share his great knowledge with humankind.

Venerated primarily by the Kashmini peoples of the Far East, Garm the Dog is another prominent Guardian. Kashmini oral tradition holds that Garm led the earliest of their people to an ancient temple that housed the nunchaku – a weapon that has since become synonymous with the proud warrior tradition of the Kashmini people. Garm is believed to have aided the Kashamin in times of need several times since then, and is therefore actively worshipped to this day. The Kashamin believe that if they lead devoted lives, then upon their deaths Garm will guide them to the Pure Land, a perfect heavenly realm where they will attain ultimate enlightenment. Garm is renowned for his loyalty and compassion.

Garm is paired with Rocinante the Horse, a Guardian noted for his determination and stoical nature. Once popular in the Western Baronies such as Cressia, Rocinante's worshippers have dwindled dramatically as the Troitan barbarians of Cressia's dense mutant pine forests attack the Barony's cities and villages. Led by Edoacer Grissom of the powerful Mineralen tribe, the Troitans worship a pantheon of vaguely-defined spider-gods who are incongruous with the Guardians. Therefore, as the Troitan barbarians expand the bounds of their territory and influence, the number of those loyal to Rocinante the Horse and the White (the force of good represented by Arthur Eld and his human descendents) gradually declines. How this will affect the strength of his Beam remains to be seen.

The other six Guardians include Camazotz the Bat, who is paired with Owsla the Hare; Telekeli the Eagle, who is paired with Aker the Lion; and Babar the Elephant, who is paired with Navius the Wolf. During the time of the Great Old Ones, the corporation known as North Central Positronics attempted to replace the Guardians with cybernetic replicas that they could control. Although many of these artificial creations survived the Great Cataclysm and still exist in some form today, the final fates of the original Guardians are the subject of much speculation and debate. According to Mid-World's *dash-dinhs*, or religious leaders, the Guardians exist beyond the reach of *ka*, and so cannot be killed even by the Crimson King. We can only hope that they are right.

DEMON ELEMENTALS



Just as the Guardians of the Beam are sworn to serve the White and to oversee the well-being of the mortal worlds, so the Guardians' counterparts, known as Demon Elementals, serve the Outer Dark and watch over the invisible world of demons, ill-sicks, and ghosts. Although there are twelve Guardians protecting the Beams (one for each Portal leading into and out of Mid-World), there are only six Demon Elementals – one assigned to each Beam. However, since each of the Elementals possess both a male and a female self, there are twelve Demon aspects in total, each one of which oversees a Beam termination point. The Demon Elementals are considered to be “true” demons – those first great shadow creatures left behind on the shores of existence after the Prim receded. They are nameless, as the Elementals have no need for names and mere mortals fear that assigning them such meaningless designations would only serve to incur their wrath.

The Demon Elementals preside over all things linked to the Prim. Below them exists an entire hierarchy of less powerful demons spawned by that primordial soup of chaos, and which, like the Elementals themselves, were stranded upon the shores of existence once the Prim receded. These non-Elemental demons, which are collectively known as the Lesser Demons of the Prim, include speaking demons, “housies” (known as “ghosts” in some circles), incubi, succubi, and ill-sicks (also known as disease-bringers). Of all the monstrous spirits protected by the Demon Elementals, the ones most feared by Mid-World's citizens are the ill-sicks, which are responsible for carrying off many children each year.

Although their hermaphroditic nature renders the Elementals sterile, their ability to take on the form of the lesser female demons known as succubi means that they can collect the seed of human men. According to the few documents left behind by the Great Old Ones' archaeologists, the ancient Druids of Mid-World often summoned Elementals to their stone circles for this purpose, though whether this deed was meant to increase the fertility of the fields or to create a bond between the visible and invisible realms is not known. Unfortunately, in recent years the Crimson King's henchmen have made use of the Demon Elementals' unusual ability, and by utilizing the Old Ones' gene splicing techniques, have created a number of human/demon hybrids.

BILLY-BUMBLERS (THROCKEN)



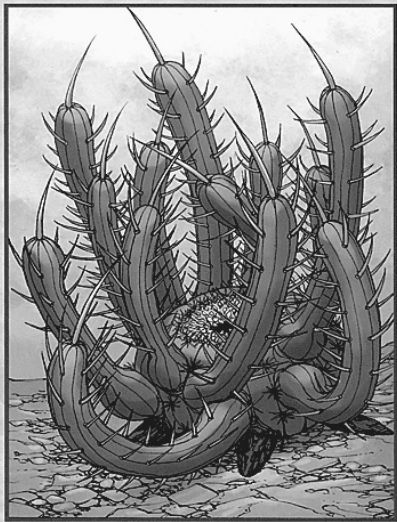
Billy-bumblers, also known as "throcken," are a species of highly intelligent, omnivorous mammal that have become extremely numerous in many regions of Mid-World. Bumblers have slender bodies, small rounded ears, long faces, and mouths that seem to be pulled back into perpetual "grins." Their paws and muzzles are hairless and exhibit dark, velvet-like skin. However, the bumbler's most prominent physical trait is the ring of golden fur that surrounds each eye.

Bumblers are well adapted for digging, with short but powerful limbs and thick, non-retractile claws. They possess a small, kinked tail and their coats are a mixture of tan, gray, and golden fur. There are several subspecies of bumbler, ranging from one to four feet in length. When alarmed, bumblers instinctively puff out the fur around their bodies, making them appear nearly twice as large as their actual size. Their nasal chambers are much larger than those of most other mammals and contain a large number of olfactory sensors, granting them a keen sense of smell.

Bumblers traditionally live in packs, but occasionally solitary bumblers are found living in the wild. They are loyal and extremely territorial, using the large scent glands located in their tails and paws to mark their territories. All bumblers are extremely intelligent and capable of simple arithmetic (such as counting and adding). They are also able to enunciate, and understand, simple sentences. Although able to use human speech, more often than not bumblers bark, yelp, and growl to communicate amongst themselves. Bumblers are technically omnivores, but prefer a diet of meat and insects.

Since the Days of Eld, bumblers' intelligence, keen sense of smell, and strong tracking instincts have made them invaluable companions. Bumblers were first domesticated and trained to hunt Grandfather Fleas, the parasitic insects that often precede the arrival of true "Type One" vampires. Early monks first discovered that their natural agility and cunning made them ideal for efficiently killing these monstrous blood-sucking fleas. Bumblers were also discovered to have the ability to follow a scent trail much longer than dogs (primarily by detecting the odor or skin cells and hair follicles left behind), and were subsequently used as hunting companions by ancient Mid-Worlders.

BOOM-FLURRIES



Boom-flurries are a sentient cactus species native to the desert region which separates the Borderlands and Thunderclap. The species has several barrel-like "arms" that rise vertically from a single, elongated trunk. These arms are approximately 12 inches in width and can grow to heights of 16 feet. At the base of the trunk are four stubby, downward thrusting stems which allow a limited degree of mobility. However, during the rainy season, boom-flurries establish a shallow root system to absorb maximum amounts of moisture from the ground, which limits their mobility during this time. The average life span of a boom-flurry is approximately 220 years.

Unlike most plant species in this area of End-World, boom-flurries are sentient carnivores that catch and digest large animals. By rapidly increasing and decreasing the turgor pressure within their cells, they are able to slowly swivel their arms to ensnare unsuspecting prey. (This same adjustment of turgor pressure also enables them to awkwardly "walk" on their downward thrusting stems). Once the prey is impaled on one of the many clumps of long, needle-like quills that grow from the plant's arms, the boom-flurry pulls its meal

toward its central trunk. The prey is then deposited within a deep cavity filled with downward-pointing quills, after which the boom-flurry begins the gradual absorption and digestion process. Depending on the size of the animal, digestion can last anywhere from days to weeks, with the boom-flurry leaving behind nothing but a shriveled carcass when it is finished.

The boom-flurry diet consists mostly of lizards and birds. Although the rock-cats that populate the Calla Desert are too fast for them to ensnare, boom-flurries have been known to catch unwitting humans and horses who find themselves lost in the desert. They emit a faint grinding sound when moving as a result of their quills brushing up against each other, which is often the only warning of an approaching boom-flurry. It is believed that hungry boom-flurries can also be distinguished by the white sap dribbling down their central trunk.

The flesh of boom-flurries is thick, water-retentive, and features a waxy coating to prevent the precious water stored within the trunk from evaporating. The plant also produces fruit about 5 inches in diameter, whose bitter and tangy odor is said by many to smell of gin and juniper.

CAN-TOI



The can-toi are the result of human/taheen interspecies mating. Unfortunately, these misbegotten creatures tend to exhibit the most undesirable characteristics of both species. Although they possess human-like bodies, the humanity of the can-toi ends at their necks. While variations in taheen physiology result in heads resembling an assortment of birds and mammals, the can-toi invariably possess the heads of red-furred rats. Also unlike taheen, the can-toi mind is susceptible to psychic probes. The can-toi's small eyes contain a relatively large number of photoreceptors, which increase sensitivity at the expense of visual acuity. They also possess multiple rows of yellowed teeth, with the most prominent ones being four elongated incisors in the front of their mouths, which are especially adept for gnawing. These incisors never stop growing, and are only worn down by the process of constant chewing. The can-toi are notorious for their poor personal hygiene, and the fur atop their heads is often infested with lice and fleas. They are also carriers of many diseases, including rabies.

Despite this lack of hygiene, the can-toi are generally very sensitive about their physical appearance and aspire to emulate the human form, which they consider to be divine. To augment their human appearance, the can-toi grow a type of living latex which they mold into rubbery, human-like masks. Each mask has a red hole on the forehead that enables the organism to breathe. The hole constantly pulsates like a throbbing fish gill, making a can-toi masquerading as a human easy to identify. Upon their ceremonial passage into adulthood, each can-toi is given a human name by his or her *clan-fam*. According to their religious doctrine, the can-toi believe that they are slowly evolving into humans and are destined to replace the entire human population once the Dark Tower falls and reality crumbles. As such, the can-toi have become ardent disciples of the Crimson King and eagerly serve as part of his Warriors of the Scarlet Eye. Since they are not as intelligent as taheen, as resourceful as humans, or as powerful as slow mutants, the can-toi are often ordered to carry out lesser tasks for the Crimson King, such as guarding prisoners and tracking down escapees. Recent surveillance indicates that a sizable can-toi population inhabits the End-World prison complex known as Devar-Toi in Thunderclap.

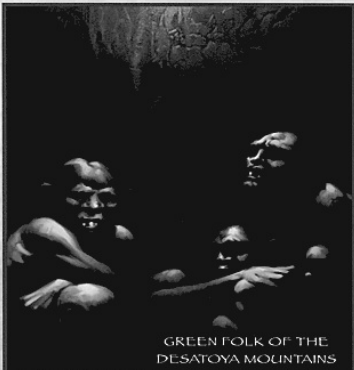
MUTANTS

Thirteen hundred years before the Age of Eld, the Great Old Ones of Mid-World engaged in an apocalyptic war which destroyed every government, military control center, and city in the world. This Great Cataclysm was part biochemical explosion, part nuclear disaster, part biological attack – and it mutated all living beings unable to find refuge from the contaminated fallout.

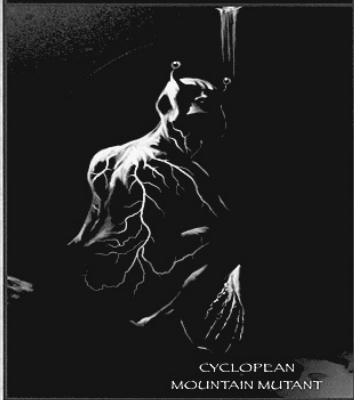
Mid-World's Slow Mutants are the direct descendants of those men and women who were exposed to and tainted by the poisonous fallout of the Great Cataclysm. Although their appearances vary greatly, they tend to have several consistent characteristics. Due in large part to a hundred generations of breeding and inter-breeding in subterranean places, most Slow Mutants are light-sensitive and nocturnal. The Green Folk of the Desatoya Mountains, for example, are descended from the families that hid in the abandoned radium mines during the height of the Great Cataclysm. Over the generations, they developed the tallowy, green fluorescent skin which later gave rise to their name. To this day, they continue to inhabit the mines, though the toxins found there have severely limited their brain development. Since their legs and feet tend to be malformed, the troll-like Green Folk walk with a shuffling gait. However, their strength tends to be threefold that of an ordinary human. The Green Folk are extremely dangerous and tend to murder and eat any who are not of their own tribe.

The Cyclopean Mountain mutants, descended from families who sought shelter in the poison-gas-filled underground rail lines, are some of the most hideously misshapen of all human mutants. Their brains are also the most seriously damaged. Like the Green Folk, their skin is greenly phosphorescent. Many have developed snail-like ommatophores and some have suckered tentacles instead of arms. Those that have retained hands tend to have webbed fingers due to the fact that they spend much time catching fish in the subterranean channels.

The Children of Roderick are one of the few mutant clans that have a highly



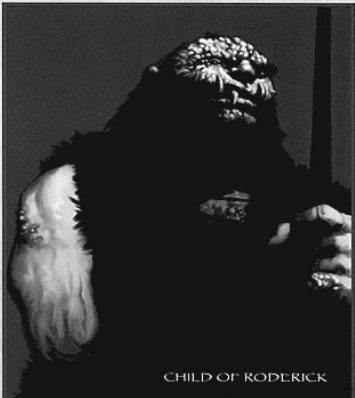
GREEN FOLK OF THE
DESATOYA MOUNTAINS



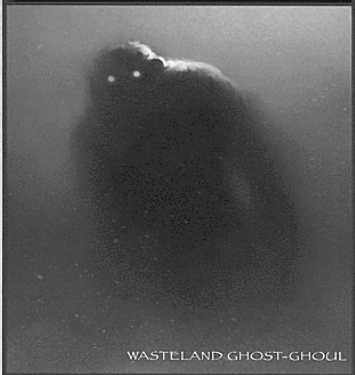
CYCLOPEAN
MOUNTAIN MUTANT

developed culture of their own. Their accomplished minstrels record the history of their people and recount both the heroic and disastrous deeds of their ancestors. While other mutant tribes battled Arthur Eld and his knights when human beings struggled to reestablish some form of civilization, the wandering tribes of Roderick swore to serve King Arthur and his descendants. According to their own legends, the tribe originated in a region called the South Plains — a region unknown to Mid-World cartographers. The Children of Roderick have a number of physical deformities that set them apart from other Slow Mutants. Double-yolked eyes, fang-like protuberances from mouth and nose, and talon-toed feet are common among them. The Children of Roderick are also prone to skin diseases which do not seem to affect other humanoid mutants.

Throughout Mid-World, mutant populations are decreasing. Among livestock and domestic animals, this is the result of careful breeding and advances in animal husbandry. However, as the poisons in the air, soil, and water gradually decrease, the number of mutations found among Mid-World's wild creatures also diminishes. On the other hand, in End-World's toxic wastelands, mutant species continue to proliferate at an alarming rate. Since humans cannot travel very far into these fey regions, accurate descriptions of the creatures that wander there are few. Some Borderland dwellers have reported seeing huge trundling beetles, gigantic serpents, and three-legged avian creatures. But most disturbing of all are tales of white, leaping monstrosities that resemble neither humans nor beasts. Further study will be necessary before the existence of these "ghost-ghouls" (as they are commonly called) can be confirmed.

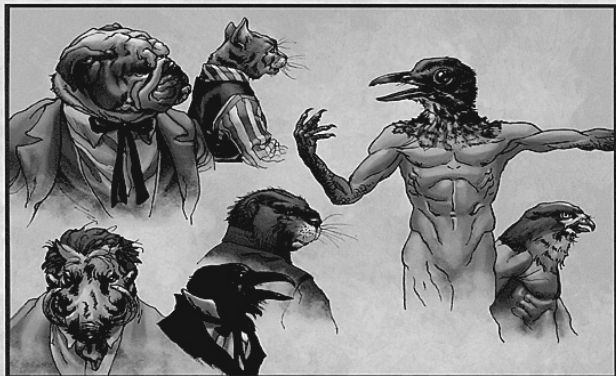


CHILD OF RODERICK



WASTELAND GHOST-GHOUL

TAHEEN



The taheen, also known as "the Third People," possess the bodies of humans and the heads of birds or beasts. Although the precise origin of the taheen is unknown, it is believed that they did not originate in the natural world (as humans), nor did they arise from the Prim (as demons). Rather, they are believed to somehow be the missing link between the Prim and the natural world. In general, taheen view themselves as physiologically superior to mere humans. For instance, their minds cannot be read by psychics, and any attempt to probe their brains results in low, indecipherable feedback. The taheen have become very proficient in the use of the semi-automatic weapons left behind by the Great Old Ones, and have proven to be valuable additions to the Crimson King's Warriors of the Scarlet Eye. They are often placed in supervisory positions by the Crimson King, usually directing the activities of lower-ranking can-toi.

There are two major taheen subspecies: avian and mammalian. Avian taheen possess bird-like heads, feathered throats, and speak in an excited, buzzing dialect. When angered, they are prone to hiss at the object of their displeasure. Some avian taheen possess talon-like hands, which prove useful in unarmed, hand-to-hand combat. Some common variations of avian taheen include thrush-type, hawk-type, raven-type, parrot-type, canary-type, and jay-type. They are often derogatorily referred to as "Bird Men."

Mammalian taheen possess beast-like heads, furred throats, and speak in a native dialect consisting of yelps and growls. Mammalian taheen often possess claw-like hands and feet, which prove useful in unarmed, hand-to-hand combat. Some common variations of mammalian taheen include warthog-type, bulldog-type, cat-type, beaver-type, weasel-type, armadillo-type, stoat-type, and aardvark-type. The vast majority of taheen live in End-World, specifically, in the sprawling region between Fedic and Thunderclap.

Legend has it that there was once a great schism in the taheen community, pitting avian taheen and mammalian taheen against each other. However, it is rumored that the two warring subspecies put their differences aside after reaffirming their shared aversion to humans. There is no indication that any such subspecies-based tensions still exist in taheen society today.

VAMPIRES



TYPE ONE VAMPIRES

Thousands of years ago, when the multiverse came into existence and the magical Prim receded, vampires were among the lesser demons left behind on the beach of existence. These vampires, known as Grandfathers or "Type One" vampires, are perhaps the most gruesome survivors of the Prim's long-ago recession. They are "true" vampires, their mouths filled with huge numbers of jagged teeth and great fangs (which can grow to several inches in diameter) that prop their deformed lips forever open. They possess coal-like black eyes, and ichor dribbles endlessly from the corners of both their eyes and their mouths. Their bodies are deformed and emaciated, with yellow jaundiced skin hanging from their skeletal frames. This skin is littered with patches of thick hair, and the skin on their cheeks, brows, and backs of their hands are tumorous with additional wild teeth. Their bodies are surrounded by indigo auras so dark that they are nearly black.

The physiology of Type One vampires is specially adapted for feeding on blood. Skin cells in the vampire's nose are specialized for thermoception, allowing them to sense the infrared heat emitted by potential prey – even during the darkest of nights. Their massive fangs are devoid of enamel and ideal for piercing and cutting flesh, while their saliva contains a potent anticoagulant which prevents the victim's blood from clotting. The anticoagulant is artfully applied to open wounds via the vampire's long, forked tongue. Vampire stomachs are tube-like organs made of a highly expandable smooth muscle, enabling the vampire to ingest massive amounts of blood. It is believed that an average Type One vampire can consume up to one-half of its own body weight in blood during a single feeding.

Type One vampires are most vulnerable to crosses. Whenever they are touched by one, it burns through their flesh and causes them to shriek with pain. When their indigo auras are extinguished, their flesh and bone liquefy into a stinking puddle of yellow ooze. Type One vampires are extremely long-lived and can survive hundreds of years in states of deep hibernation. However, due to the dangerous nature of their feeding habits, it is estimated that only a handful of the Type

One vampires still exist. Type One vampires traditionally wield large, electric-powered sabers known as "fireswords."

GRANDFATHER FLEAS

Type One vampires are almost always accompanied by Grandfather Fleas, insects approximately seven inches in length that feast upon the blood and scraps left behind by the Type Ones. Grandfather Fleas' bodies are covered in an extremely durable sclerite exoskeleton. This exoskeleton hosts hundreds of spines which point away from the flea's head and help anchor the flea to its meal during the often raucous vampiric feeding frenzies. In addition, they possess several mouthparts which assist in feeding upon carcasses left behind by Type One vampires. Their mandibles form two serrated, saw-like blades that cut the skin. Then, their long, tube-like epipharynx acts like a needle. The mandibles surround the epipharynx, and together form a powerful puncturing organ. Grandfather Fleas possess three pairs of legs attached to the thorax. The hind legs are elongated and quadruple-jointed, enabling the fleas to jump up to six feet vertically and up to thirteen feet horizontally.

Grandfather Fleas most often lay their oval-shaped eggs in decaying carcasses. When the larvae emerge, they are able to eat a variety of organic substances for nourishment. However, once emerging from their pupae phase as adults, their diet consists of blood alone. As such, the Grandfather Fleas have proven to be a nuisance (and, on occasion, a threat to life in their own right) for millennia. Since ancient times, Mid-Worlders have trained billy-bumblers to hunt and kill the parasitic Grandfather Fleas.

TYPE TWO VAMPIRES

Type One vampires require blood plasma for sustenance. When they feed upon humans, the victims are transformed into "Type Two" vampires. The Type Two vampires exist under the thrall of the Type One vampires, and are nearly devoid of all free will and intelligence. In addition, a genetic flaw in the Type Two vampire immune system renders them extremely allergic to the ultraviolet radiation contained in sunlight, forcing them to satisfy their unquenchable thirst for blood by feeding voraciously at night. Due to their diminished cognitive capacities, Type Two vampires have a relatively short life expectancy.

TYPE THREE VAMPIRES

In turn, when Type Two vampires feed upon humans, the victims are transformed into "Type Three" vampires. Unlike Types One and Two vampires, they are unable to transform their victims into new vampires. They retain more of their humanity and free will than Type Two vampires and are thus often able to pass for human. They are also able to exist in sunlight and consume foods other than blood for nourishment. They are, however, surrounded by a hazy blue aura which smells faintly of burnt onions, both of which can be detected by trained psychics. Type Three vampires secrete a special enzyme that afflicts their victims with temporary amnesia, preventing them from ever remembering the attack.

WOLVES (GREENCLOAKS)



When the Great Old Ones still dominated the world with their mastery of science and technology, they formed the corporation known as North Central Positronics in an attempt to make additional breakthroughs in the field of reality manipulation. Their experiments with the space-time continuum culminated with an effort to destroy the Dark Tower, which they had discovered served as the nexus of all realities, as well as the magical Beams which supported the Tower. Their plan was to then replace both the Tower and Beams with technological replicas patented by North Central Positronics. To protect their new creations, they also manufactured robotic doppelgangers of the original Guardians, each of which was programmed to destroy anyone who attempted to do harm to their respective Beams.

The Wolf Pack was one such series of robots. Modeled after Navius, the Wolf Guardian, the Wolves were programmed to patrol the Path of the Wolf, Way of the Elephant. For the first centuries of their existence, the Wolves carried out their programming with exemplary results. Even after the society of the Great Old Ones was destroyed due to nuclear and chemical catastrophe, the Wolves continued to defend the Path of the Wolf, Way of

the Elephant, from all who would threaten it, such as the new races of mutants that aimlessly wandered the scarred wastelands. However, in recent years, it has been reported that the Wolves' programming is slowly beginning to deteriorate. As the once dependable Wolves go offline one by one, it is believed that the Crimson King is directing his minions to retrieve the malfunctioning robots so that they can be reprogrammed by his team of scientists. If this is indeed accurate, one fears to imagine the nefarious tasks for which the Crimson King will repurpose the Wolves.

The Wolves are true technological marvels, standing at approximately eight feet in height. Powered by a complicated tapestry of relays, servomonitors, and hydraulic pumps, the Wolves wear wolf masks and hooded green cloaks which help to conceal their true robotic nature (leading many to alternately refer to them as "Greencloaks"). It is only the faint clicking and clunking noises caused by their internal mechanical systems that reveal the Wolves' man-made origins. With gauntleted hands and booted feet, the Wolves are heavily armored beneath their cloaks and impervious to most conventional weapons. Small radar dishes mounted on each Wolf's head enable them to constantly send and receive information. Without these radars, the Wolves would lose all sense of purpose and cease to function. The Wolves are also equipped with a variety of weapons and accessories. Internal sirens enable them to communicate with other Wolves in the vicinity. In hand-to-hand combat, the Wolves wield "light-sticks," brilliant heat swords that burn with a red-orange glow and can incinerate flammable material on contact. For longer range attacks, the Wolves employ "sneetches," metal balls (approximately three inches in diameter) that become buzzing, heat-seeking explosives when activated. They ride mechanical gray horses which can reach speeds of up to ninety wheels per hour.

CALLA BORDERLANDS



The Calla Borderlands are the easternmost frontier of Mid-World, and the last habitable area before entering into End-World. Located southeast of the Mid-Forest Bog, the Borderlands are a sprawling, green crescent irrigated primarily by the River Whye. The Borderlands are also the home of approximately seventy villages, all known as "callas" in the local dialect. The northernmost town, Calla Sen Chre, is well-known for its production and export of sheep's milk, wool, and titanium products. Calla Divine, the southwesternmost town, primarily exports coffee beans and legumes. Manni Redpath, a village populated exclusively by the aloof Manni religious sect, is also located within the Borderlands.

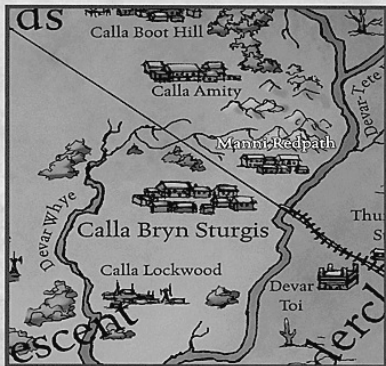
Many of the Borderlands' callas share common characteristics. Nearly all roads are made of smooth, packed dirt known as "oggan." The large, open fields of the Borderlands are also conducive to raising livestock. Specifically, many of the callas are renowned for breeding stubby, sturdy-legged ponies (approximately forty-five inches high at the withers) which are ideal for carrying heavy loads of supplies.

The River Whye is central to life in the Borderland callas. It has two major tributaries: the Devar Whye, which flows west of Calla Bryn Sturgis, and the Devar-Tete Whye, which flows to the east and serves as the de facto Border between Mid-World and End-World. While the western bank of the Devar-Tete Whye is extremely fertile, a vast expanse of arid desert stretches miles into End-World once one crosses over to the eastern bank. South of Calla Lockwood, the river's two tributaries join together and flow into the South Seas. The river's silt-rich waters irrigate the many rice paddies, which are a staple crop of the Borderland callas.

In addition to crop irrigation, the River Whye is also a valuable trade route for the Borderland callas. Merchants navigate wide, paddle-wheel-driven flatboats up and down the river to sell and trade goods. Although there is a railroad corridor connecting the Borderland callas with villages and settlements on the eastern side of the river (such as Thunderclap Station and Fedic), it fell into disuse after End-World's human population was decimated by disease and pollutants.

The climate of the Borderland callas is characterized by hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters, although temperatures vary greatly from calla to calla. For instance, Calla Sen Chre averages temperatures of 41 degrees during the Big Demon Moon and 62 degrees during the Peddler's Moon, while Calla Divine averages temperatures of 72 degrees during the Big Demon Moon and 90 degrees during the Peddler's Moon. The natural vegetation of the region has adapted to survive long, hot periods of summer droughts. In addition, callas that lay at a slightly higher elevation and are cut off from the mild river winds, such as Calla Bryn Bouse, may experience colder winters with occasional snow.

CALLA BRYN STURGIS



One of the medium-sized villages of the Calla Borderlands, Calla Bryn Sturgis was once prominent due to its close proximity to the main railroad corridor into End-World, which crosses over the River Whye at the Devil's Causeway. Today, however, the railroad has fallen into disuse following the decimation of several End-World population centers, including Thunderclap and Fedic. Calla Bryn Sturgis is also known for its high number of twin births, although it is unknown if this is a wholly natural phenomenon or rather the result of a subtle mutation due to living so close to the polluted atmosphere of nearby End-World. Also of significance, the Calla Bryn Sturgis village center was built directly upon the Path of the Bear, Way of the Turtle, one of the six magnetic Beams upholding the Dark Tower.

its location one-third of the way down the Grand Crescent, it has a temperate climate ideal for growing a wide array of vegetables. Major crops include corn, sharpshoot, legumes, potatoes, onions, and coffee beans. Wild pokeberries, considered a delicacy in many of the outlying callas, grow quite prolifically in Calla Bryn Sturgis, and are harvested from the roadsides when they ripen to a bright orange hue. In addition to the short pack horses bred in many of the Borderland callas, Calla Bryn Sturgis is also known for producing large quantities of cattle and hogs for meat, as well as donkeys and burros for transportation. The largest farmhold estate is the aptly-named Seven Mile Farm, founded by Wyatt Overholser several generations ago and passed down through the Overholser bloodline ever since. Calla Bryn Sturgis' main trading partners are the nearby villages of Calla Amity and Calla Lockwood.

The main thoroughway in Calla Bryn Sturgis is High Street, on which one can find both the Town Gathering Hall as well as the outdoor Pavilion, where many of the village's public events are held. The second major boulevard is the East Road, which runs almost parallel with the River Whye. Both High Street and East Road are paved with the packed dirt known as oggan, but all smaller streets are surfaced with oiled, gravel-like soil. One hour northeast of Calla Bryn Sturgis is the arroyo country, a semi-arid region filled with hills and gulches. The arroyo country became particularly significant to Calla Bryn Sturgis' economy after the discovery of a garnet deposit in the hills two generations ago. The region is also known for its dense population of rock-cats, which are constantly sought after by hunters and trappers who use the beasts' oily bile to treat rheumatiz, arthritis, and other debilitating musculoskeletal conditions.

Calla Bryn Sturgis averages temperatures of 54 degrees during the Big Demon Moon and 83 degrees during the Peddler's Moon. Due to its close proximity to the River Whye, there has not been a reported instance of snowfall in Calla Bryn Sturgis for several generations.

LADY ORIZA



Although she is considered a mere folk heroine in New Canaan and its neighboring baronies, to the people of the Calla Borderlands, where rice is a staple of life, Lady Oriza is recognized as a pagan rice goddess. Also known as the "Lady of the Rice" and the "Lady of the Plate," Oriza is believed to have once lived in Castle Waydon by the River Send. According to mythic tradition, her family ruled the Send Valley after the civilization of the Great Old Ones collapsed but prior to the ascension of Arthur Eld to the throne of All-World.

Legend has it that Oriza was the only daughter of Lord Grenfall, the wildest *dinh* in all of the River Baronies. When Grenfall was murdered by one of his cunning rivals, the infamous outlaw prince known as Gray Dick, Lady Oriza plotted revenge against her father's killer. Secretly, she practiced throwing a specially weighted dinner plate that had a sharpened rim and fluted channel carved on the underside that made a whistling noise when the disc flew through the air. When her training was complete and her accuracy was perfect, she invited Gray Dick to Castle Waydon for dinner, with the stipulation that

neither would carry arms to the meal. Some legends say she acted after only the second toast, while others say she waited until her entire twelve-course meal of roasted beef and herbed rice was served. What is for certain, however, is that at some point Lady Oriza flung her sharpened plate on a slightly rising course in Gray Dick's direction, beheading the harrier as he sat contentedly in his chair.

While this is the most common legend surrounding Lady Oriza, there are many others. The oldest of these maintains that Oriza created the first man, from whose breath arose the first woman. In yet other folktales, Oriza's handmaiden Marian temporarily left the service of her lady and went on quests and adventures of her own against a posse of vampire horsemen.

Today, Lady Oriza's legacy is the "Sisters of Oriza," a sorority of community-oriented women popular in many of the Borderland callas. In addition to helping others, the social group commonly cooks for festivals, weddings, and funerals; holds sewing circles and quilting bees to assist needy families; tends to the upkeep of parks and public buildings; and organizes and chaperones youth dances.

However, the Sisters of Oriza are perhaps best known for their skilled use of the weapon created by their patron goddess. Modeled after the plate that Lady Oriza used to kill Gray Dick, the Sisters wield blue plates whose patterns of delicate blue webbing are meant to symbolize young seedling rice plants. These plates, called *Orizas* (or "*Rizas*" for short), are slightly over one foot in diameter and made from titanium by artisans in Calla Sen Chre. Three-quarters of the plate's edge is carved to a razor-sharp point, while the remaining one-quarter is left dull and slightly thicker so it can be used as a grip. In addition, a small metal pod is attached to the underside in order to mimic the whistling sound made by that first deadly plate flung by Lady Oriza. When not in use, the *Rizas* are carried in silk-lined bags. Once a month, the Sisters of Oriza hold a ceremonial plate-throw in honor of Lady Oriza's triumph over the vile Gray Dick.

THE MANNI



The Manni are one of Mid-World's oldest and most peculiar religious sects. According to Manni lore, their religion was founded by the prophet Hnaegi shortly before the Reign of the Eld. The entire religion is based on travel to other worlds via the treacherous *todash-taken*, otherwise known as the holes in reality. When traveling *todash*, both one's body and mind are temporarily transported to a new realm, leaving behind only an eerie, shimmering grey aura. To facilitate this *todash* travel, the Manni worship a supreme entity known as "the Over," or, alternatively, "the Force."

When attempting to travel via *todash*, Manni men form circles and pray to the Over. Their prayer most often takes the form of rapid, high-pitched humming which may sound like squeaking to the uninitiated, but which is actually an elaborate mantra used as a conduit to focus their spiritual energies. They pray to the Over for safe passage and to enliven the religious artifacts which they use to travel *todash*. Such artifacts include plumb-bobs (which look like the small, wooden spinning tops used by children) and shell-shaped magnets ("mags"). The more powerful bobs and mags are kept in four-foot-long ironwood boxes known as "coffs," which are engraved with stars, moons, and other cabalistic geometric shapes. The Manni then pray to the Over for "kaven," the persistence of magic in the world. They grasp each plumb-bob and mag by its silver clasping point and use them to harness the latent magic in the area. As the plumb-bob swings like a pendulum, *todash* portals open in its shimmering wake.

Manni men spend years learning how to meditate and how to use the plumb-bobs and mags to guide them through the *todash* holes in reality. In addition, the Manni are trained to be uniquely attuned to their environment in order to ensure that the version of Earth to which they finally return is the same as the one from which they came.

Manni believe that those who lead moral lives and strictly adhere to their ancient traditions and scripture will become one with the *todash-taken* upon shedding their mortal shells. This state of

oneness with todash is known as "Ken'ar" and is the highest level of spiritual attainment one can hope to achieve in the Manni belief system. However, those who succumb to sin, corruption, and desire during life will be relegated to the Pit of Na'ar, a fiery nether realm where the wicked are punished for all eternity.

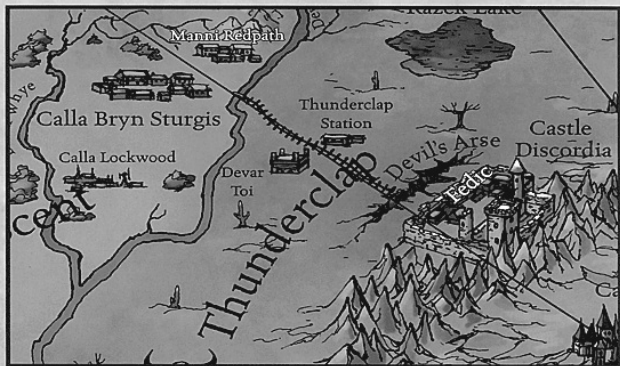
Manni culture is just as distinct as their belief system. Regardless of the temperature, Manni men wear voluminous cloaks of either black or dark blue as well as round-crowned black hats. As a result, outsiders often derogatorily refer to them as "Bluecloaks." Manni elders invariably have long beards, and younger Manni men wear shorter beards with their hair pulled back into long braids. They wear smaller versions of their plumb-bobs and mags on fine-link silver chains around their necks. All Manni men have very long fingernails, as their religion prohibits them from cutting their nails more than twice per year. Manni women wear calf-length, plain-cut dresses in solid colors, usually black, grey, or dark blue. The Manni rarely ride horseback; rather, they drive large bucka waggons with rounded white canvas tops to reflect the sun and keep the interior cool on hot summer days. These bucka waggons are usually so large that they must be drawn by a team of six mules or four horses.

The Manni live segregated lives, eschewing outside society and avoiding the influence of foreign culture and technology. (They consider most outsiders heathens.) Manni societies are led by a *dinh*, who in turn is advised by several village elders. Manni elders often hold palaver to discuss issues of import within "the Tempa," a large gathering hall which is central to most Manni villages. Whenever a new Manni village is settled, the Tempa is the first building that the community erects. One of the largest Manni civilizations today is the village of Manni Redpath (or "Manni Kra Redpath-a-Sturgis" in the Manni dialect), which is located in the Borderlands northeast of Calla Bryn Sturgis.

The foundation of the Manni economy is agriculture. While crops vary somewhat from village to village depending on the climate and soil quality, the Manni traditionally grow squash, pumpkins, garlic, eggplant, and peppers. The Manni are also renowned for their animal husbandry skills and the quality of their livestock. They are excellent cowherds and well-known throughout Mid-World for their poultry products.

It is common in Manni villages for men to wed multiple wives. It is believed that this polygynous tradition began, in part, as a result of the need to sire many offspring to perform manual labor in an agriculture-based society. Those who leave Manni society to wed outsiders are shunned by the rest of their clan, who believe they will suffer for all eternity in the infernal depths of Na'ar. The Manni, who refer to themselves as "the Seeking Folk" and "the Travelers on Ka's Wind," refer with contempt to these traitors as "the Forgetful Folk."

THUNDERCLAP



Known as the "Land of Darkness," Thunderclap is a large area of poisoned desert located east of the River Whye and west of Fedic, Castle Discordia, and the Discordia Badlands. It is a transitional zone between End-World and the Calla Borderlands.

Before the Great Old Ones' toxins rendered the entirety of Thunderclap more or less uninhabitable, this transitional zone contained numerous bustling population centers. The train corridor linking the town of Fedic to the east and the Callas to the west passed through the hub of Thunderclap Station, transforming the surrounding villages into marketplaces for many farmers and merchants looking to unload their goods. However, whatever civilization remained after the Old People's disastrous contamination was totally obliterated when the Crimson King released an experimental poison gas into the region's atmosphere. The gas did not dissipate and permanently loomed over the landscape, blocking out all light from the sun. Most of the frightened populace (those who did not die slow and painful deaths as a result of the initial gas exposure) became refugees and traveled eastward to Fedic, where they hoped to start new lives. Unfortunately, by the time they arrived, Fedic's population had also been decimated. The few who tried to travel to other levels of the Dark Tower via the transdimensional doorways in Fedic's NCP Arc 16 Experimental Station lost their lives or their minds in the attempt.

Today, Thunderclap is a hyper-arid, wind-swept desert plagued by sand storms and dust devils. The wildlife has been decimated and there is little to no vegetation or precipitation. The dark grey skies are reminiscent of a constant eclipse, with the only light coming from an artificial, clockwork sun which was recently developed and installed by the Crimson King's engineers, based on designs and schematics left behind by the Great Old Ones. Can Steke-Tete, a sharp upthrust of rock approximately fourteen wheels northwest of Thunderclap Station, is one of the region's only natural landmarks. Thunderclap Station is now deserted, with rusted, dilapidated tracks radiating outward like the threads of a steel spider web and littered with a tangle of stalled train cars. It is believed that underground corridors connect Thunderclap with the catacombs beneath Fedic's Castle Discordia.

Today, Thunderclap is inhabited mainly by taheen, can-toi, and mutants, most of which are

fiercely loyal to the Crimson King. In fact, undisclosed sources indicate that the Crimson King is constructing one of his largest prisons in the area. Known to the Warriors of the Scarlet Eye as the "Devar-Toi," or Big Prison, it is a nearly impenetrable facility, patrolled by North Central Positronics robots, guarded by two large watchtowers, and surrounded by triple run of electrically charged wire powerful enough to kill a full-grown man on contact.



However, most of Thunderclap's former human settlements remain unpopulated ghost towns, such as the Hamlet of Gulchwood (pictured above). Once the center of a lucrative rutile mining operation, Gulchwood's entire population took part in an ill-fated eastbound exodus shortly after the sun's light was extinguished. Other settlements, such as the Village of Fireweed, were inhabited by mutant squatters following the demise of the human population.

THE DISCORDIA BADLANDS



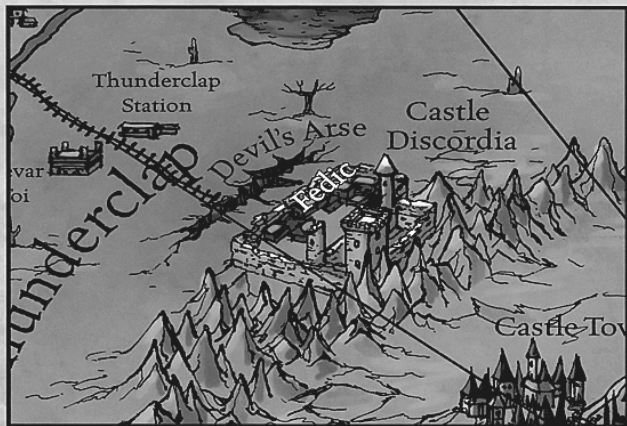
Deep in End-World, beyond the River Whye and the Dark Lands of Thunderclap, lays the Discordia Badlands. This expansive region, known in some circles as the Eastern Plains and the Nowhere Lands, was poisoned decades ago by none other than the mad Crimson King, leaving the earth barren and void of any life. Not even devilgrass, a weed that grows prolifically in nearly all other regions of the world, is capable of germinating in the sterile Badlands soil.

The Discordia Badlands stretch from the southeastern side of Castle Discordia to the northwestern edge of the White Lands of Empathica. The westernmost portions of the Badlands are characterized by miles upon miles of sun-scorched red earth. The unvarying blue skies are interrupted only by occasional buttes and mesas that poke over the horizon. As one travels eastward, the terrain becomes much harsher, with broken rocks and gaping crevices littering the landscape. The southeastern most region of the Badlands, which is adjacent to the Crimson King's Le Casse Roi Russe, features a petrified garden of needle-like rock formations.

Fortunately for those unlucky enough to traverse the Badlands, ancient pumps installed by the Great Old Ones are situated nearly every twenty wheels. Although rusted and corroding, a vast majority of the pumps are still able to pull cold gushes of mineral water from deep beneath the crusted surface of the Badlands. Human travelers are also advised to dress appropriately when traveling through the Badlands, as the poisoned soil and atmosphere can cause malignant pimples and boils to break out on the skin following prolonged exposure.

A main road winds its way through the Badlands along the path of the Bear-Turtle Beam. Once a central artery used by scientists traveling from the Discordia Dogan to the heart of End-World, it is now in a state of disrepair. However, those who must travel from the Discordia Mountains to Le Casse Roi Russe, the home of the Crimson King, will still find it useful. Once it approaches the Crimson King's domain, the road becomes the "King's Way."

FEDIC



Once one of End-World's largest population centers, the town of Fedic has been deserted since the Crimson King unleashed the plague known as the Red Death upon its unsuspecting populace. Fedic's population was obliterated, and those inhabitants who were not killed by the plague itself met their ends trying to escape. Today, Fedic's main boulevard is littered with abandoned hotels, saloons, and brothels, as prior to the ecological catastrophe that killed its human inhabitants, it was notorious for drunken revelry and prostitution.

Fedic's main boulevard ends at the inner wall of Castle Discordia, a heavily fortified structure, which was no doubt constructed long ago to protect the entire town's population from invaders. Behind Castle Discordia's inner keep is a five-hundred-foot drop into a bed of large, needlelike rocks that form the base of the Discordia Mountains. Although there were once stairs running down the back of the inner keep, they have eroded over time and have partially collapsed. The castle's architecture is highlighted by many squat, stone, load-bearing pillars, merlons, and battlements. At the center of the castle is a large courtyard, and a twisted allure serves as the walkway at the top of Castle Discordia's inner wall. The castle's outer wall surrounds the entire village of Fedic, and the two towers rising high above this outer wall once served as lookout posts for castle sentries. The castle itself, which reeks of dank stone, is connected to the Fedic Dogan (NCP Arc 16 Experimental Station) via a series of subterranean tunnels.

The railroad corridor that begins near Calla Bryn Sturgis in the Borderlands terminates in Fedic, but has fallen into disuse since the wholesale slaughter of Fedic's population. Although the deserted town is no longer the center for trade and debauchery that it once was, the Dogan known as NCP Arc 16 Experimental Station within the town's borders is still operational. According to undisclosed sources, Arc 16's machinery is now being used by those devoted to the Crimson King's cause.

NORTH CENTRAL POSITRONICS



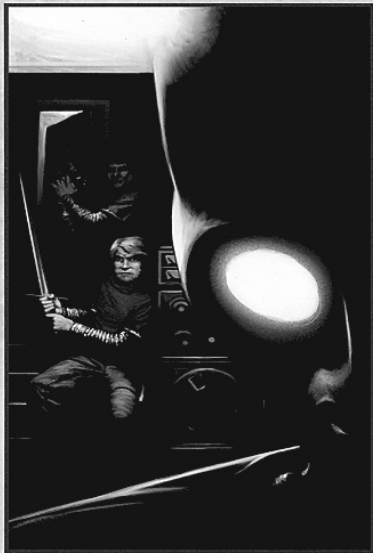
Long ago, the world was dominated by the Great Old Ones, also known as the Old People, an ancient race who developed a godlike mastery over all sciences; from mechanical engineering to nuclear physics and beyond. The technological advances of the Old Ones eventually made it possible for them to manipulate the fabric of the multiverse and reality itself. The corporation known as North Central Positronics (NCP) was at the forefront of these breakthroughs in reality manipulation; but although their many breakthroughs seemed miraculous, they were conducted with little or no insight into the true nature of the multiverse. Nonetheless, the North Central Positronics-funded experiments with the time-space continuum continued, and they sought to replace the magical Dark Tower (a nexus among all realities) and its Beams with technological replicas. These "achievements" became possible as North Central Positronics began to merge technology and magic, which enabled them to accomplish feats that would not have been feasible with either technology or magic alone. To facilitate the fusion of technology and magic, North Central Positronics constructed series of Quonset hut-like military control centers known as Dogans, where scientists could experiment and monitor the effects that these experiments had on the larger multiverse. Today, there are three major Dogans still operating in the proximity of End-World: NCP Northeast Corridor Arc Quadrant Outpost

16 (located near the Calla Borderlands on the River Whye), the massive NCP Arc 16 Experimental Station (located within Fedic), and the NCP Federal Outpost 19 (located between the White Lands of Empathica and the Dark Tower itself). Many, but not all, of the Dogans still operating have fallen under the control of the Crimson King's Warriors of the Scarlet Eye.

Many other North Central Positronics inventions continue to effect everyday life in End-World. Perhaps the most well-known of their still-functioning creations are the Asimov-class robots. These robots were designed to perform message delivery, maintenance, and an assortment of other domestic services. They are equipped with electric blue optic sensors that grant them three-X macrovision (as well as with infrared backup vision if their primary optic sensors are damaged or

destroyed). Each robot stands precisely seven-feet-and-six-inches tall, and their thin but powerful stainless steel arms and feet are multi-jointed, allowing for maximum mobility powered by internal servomotors. Each robot is also equipped with a distress siren in the case of emergency.

Beneath each Asimov-class robot's steel-domed head are the components, discs, and repair tutorials that function as the general mentation system (GMS). Unfortunately, North Central Positronics' mechanical engineers discovered that the smarter they made their robots, the more logic faults would be present. In an attempt to compensate for these faults, the engineers set up a stringent quarantine system that treated technical glitches as if they were computer viruses, essentially preventing the glitches from infecting the robot's GMS. Each robot was then equipped with two mentation systems: one for rational systems and one for irrational systems. Despite these precautions, many of the robots that survived the Great Cataclysm are now slowly succumbing to the gradual breakdown of their GMSs.



DOGANS



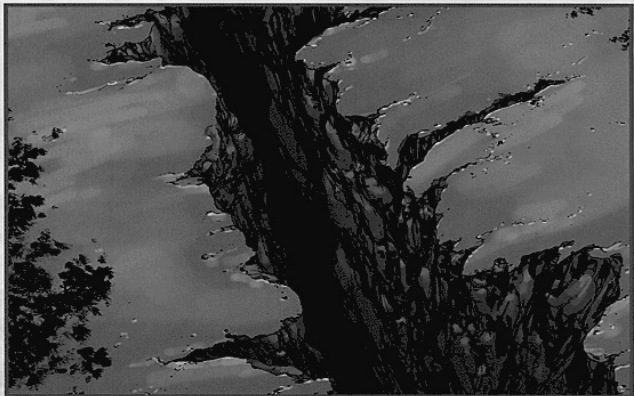
Built by the Great Old Ones under the tutelage of the wizard Maerlyn, Mid-World's many Dogans were created as experimental stations where technology could be fused with magic. Some strategically placed Dogans also served as paramilitary control centers used primarily for surveillance of other Mid-World outposts. According to numerous undisclosed sources, the Dogans also had surveillance cameras located on other levels of the Dark Tower.

Financed by private companies such as North Central Positronics, the Dogans offered numerous commercial services to the Imperium's populace, including mental enhancement treatments and mind-to-mind communication technology. However, the Dogans were also used by the Old Ones to create annihilating weapons of mass destruction. Ironically, many of the Dogans survived the Great Cataclysm, which their weapons wrought, but their creators did not.

Perhaps the most sophisticated and well-known Dogan is the NPC Arc 16 Experimental Station, located in downtown Fedic, which was used as the Old Ones' central facility for merging technology and magic. Connected to nearby Castle Discordia via a labyrinth of subterranean passageways, Arc 16 is currently under the control of the Crimson King's followers, the Warriors of the Scarlet Eye. Arc 16's Control Suite nerve center is tended by highly advanced Mech-Foremen constructed by North Central Positronics. Lower levels feature tiled corridors and a rotunda with doorways leading to other times and places. The lowest, darkest levels of the facility are rumored to be inhabited by both wild mutant animals and man-eating todash monsters. Therefore, they remain unmapped.

It is believed that much of the magic-and-technology-merging equipment created by the Old Ones is still operational within the Arc 16 Experimental Station. Although it is not certain how the Crimson King plans to use these tools to further his own goals, it is feared that such powerful instruments will somehow play a significant role in his master plan.

THE DEVIL'S ARSE



Before the dawn of time and the formation of the multiverse, there was nothing but the magical Prim, that primordial soup of creation that stretched across all existence like a chaotic ocean. This was the case until Gan, the Spirit of the Dark Tower, emerged from the formless Prim and gave birth to the entire multiverse. As Gan slowly expanded, the Prim receded into nothingness. Soon all that remained of the Prim were the assorted demons stranded on Gan's earth who once called the Prim their home.

Such was the origin of the gaping chasm located just northwest of the town of Fedic. It was here that large numbers of the demons and monsters from todash space became stranded upon the Prim's retreat. Unlike the sterile Demon Elementals left behind by the Prim, the horrific monstrosities of the chasm spend their waking hours reproducing and attempting to escape confinement. Fortunately, it appears that the majority of these monsters have been unsuccessful in their attempts to escape the chasm, which has been dubbed the "Devil's Arse" by the locals as a result of the grotesque nature of its inhabitants. However, it is known that these restless creatures never give up the pursuit of their ultimate goal and are constantly devising new ways to free themselves. It is believed that they are currently attempting to tunnel through the earth to the catacombs beneath Castle Discordia and Fedic. If they succeed, the Crimson King may become the lesser of two evils that Mid-World faces.



LE CASSE ROI Russe



The Crimson King conducts his dark activities from his throne room within Le Casse Roi Russe, an imposing fortress which sits deep within End-World. Constructed entirely of dark red stone, the castle's pulsing red glow (known as the "Forge of the King"), can be seen from as far away as Castle Discordia. Folklore contains many stories about young men and women who were turned to stone for staring at "the Forge of the King." Unfortunately, these stories are probably based on fact since the castle's evil glow enralls all those who gaze upon it too long.

Le Casse Roi Russe is connected to the village of Fedic by the King's Way, a coach road that cuts through the entire region of the Discordia Badlands. Before reaching the castle proper, the King's Way runs through Castle Town, a weirding village that languishes in Le Casse Roi Russe's shadow. Castle Town's cobbled side streets are lined with narrow, steep-roofed cottages exhibiting thin and abnormally high doorways. Everything in the village seems crooked and slightly askew — from the twisting streets to the dilapidated houses. Many people believe that these houses are haunted by housies and mind-spirits, the latter being a particularly malignant form of demon that causes insanity.

Once past Castle Town, the King's Way spills out into a wide cobbled forecourt guarded assiduously by the Crimson King's most loyal sentries. This forecourt serves as the Red King's execution yard, a vile place decorated with fraying nooses and the hanged bodies of both men and taheen. The courtyard's cobbles are covered by the guano dropped by the flocks of black, hook-beaked rooks that haunt the castle and feast upon the bodies of the dead.

Two guard towers, each of which is emblazoned with the Crimson King's symbol of the staring red eye, stand erect above the outer courtyard, protecting the main castle complex from any would-be trespassers. Between the outer and inner courtyards runs the putrid, yellow-foamed Casse Roi Russe River. This foul river, which is littered with jagged black rocks, serves as the castle's moat. A humped stone bridge behind the courtyard's main gate serves as the only passageway over the polluted river.

The central castle itself rises in an intricate tapestry of towers, turrets, and blackish-red ramparts that seem to defy the laws of physics. Overhead, twenty-eight elevated stone walkways twist and crisscross at different levels of the castle, facilitating turret-to-turret access. The central castle building appears very plain and sober, adorned only by the Crimson King's sigil — a staring red eye — which is carved into the keystone arch above the main entrance. In a style of architecture similar to the cottages of Castle Town, the castle's windows and doorways are peculiarly narrow.

THE WHITE LANDS OF EMPATHICA



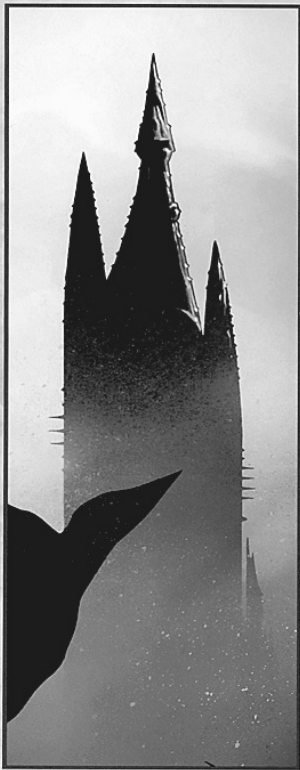
Located southeast of the Discordia Badlands, the White Lands of Empathica boast End-World's highest elevations. As one scales the massive upslope of the White Lands, the temperatures begin to decrease rapidly, and as the elevation increases, the prairie-like landscape quickly transforms into that of a frigid tundra. Even during the so-called "warm season," sizable patches of snow litter the grasslands of Empathica. At other times of the year, seemingly endless blizzards deposit several feet of soft snow upon the landscape.

Unlike other nearby regions of End-World, the White Lands of Empathica are bustling with wildlife. Deer, rabbits, and lemmings all make Empathica their home; and, surprisingly, there are very few mutations. The landscape of Empathica consists mostly of heavily wooded areas, open meadows, and high forested ridges. The forested regions are populated with thousands of green fir and birch trees. The undersnow region consists of a series of long, grassy slopes (although most of the grass is colorless and dead) as well as shallow valleys with isolated stands of evergreen trees.

On Empathica's eastern downslope, the path known as Tower Road leads downhill directly toward the Dark Tower. Although the road is often blocked with impassible snow deposits (especially in the higher elevations) plowing robots created by North Central Positronics regularly clear the path. At the base of the eastern downslope stands the Dogan known as NCP Federal Outpost 19, which was originally created by North Central Positronics to monitor the nearby Dark Tower.

At its highest elevations, the White Lands average temperatures of -25 degrees during the Big Demon Moon and 30 degrees during the Peddler's Moon.

THE DARK TOWER



The Dark Tower exists at the heart of End-World. Connecting this universe to countless others, it is the linchpin of the time-space continuum and the hub of the universe – the central, stable pillar around which all worlds spin. As the worlds spin and the seasons pass, the Dark Tower generates time and yet is itself timeless. At the beginning of his reign many hundreds of years ago, Arthur Eld swore to protect the Tower from the chaotic forces of the Prim – an allegiance honored by all of his human offspring. Unfortunately for the multiple worlds which spin about the central axis of the Tower, Arthur's one non-human son – known as the Crimson King – pledged himself to the Outer Dark and swore to bring both the Tower and the multiverse crashing down.

Situated in a field of red roses known as Can'-Ka No Rey, the looming, sooty gray Tower is believed by many inhabitants of Mid-World to be nothing more than a legend. However to others it is a living entity – the sacred incarnation of the great god Gan. Emanating from the two steel posts which jut from the top of the Tower are six stationary magnetic energy radii known as Beams. These Beams pass through the nexus of the Dark Tower and maintain the proper alignment of time, space, size and dimension in all of the worlds. These Beams extend throughout Mid-World, affecting the cloud movement, gravitational pull, and space-time alignment along their paths. Two Portals exist at the opposite ends of each Beam, creating a total of twelve major Portals leading into and out of Mid-World. Each of the twelve Portals serves as a doorway to other dimensions and is protected by an animal totem known as a Guardian.

The Tower stands nearly 120 wheels from the southeasternmost corner of the White Lands of Empathica. The approach to the Dark Tower from this direction consists of a long, gently upsloping hill and an overgrown road which is lined with the crumbling remains of rock walls on both sides. Wild roses grow in profusion amid the tumbles of broken fieldstone paving. Beyond the walls are strange stone edifices, obelisks, and the ruins of temple-like castles which undoubtedly served as religious monuments at some point in the distant past. Statues of giant stone men face the north, their fierce visages painted red. The entire Tower is surrounded by the field of crimson roses known as Can'-Ka No Rey, the outermost edge of which extends approximately 500 arcs of the wheel away from the Tower's base. A circular white

road surrounds the Tower and separates it from Can'-Ka No Rey.

The Dark Tower itself features narrow, slit windows which emit an eldritch blue glow and ascend the building in a gradual upward spiral nearly 600 feet into the sky. Each of its twisting stairways leads to a different level of creation, including distant time periods and alternate realities. At the top of the Tower is an oriel window consisting of twelve colors: red, orange, yellow, dark green, dark blue, indigo, violet, pale blue, pale green, deep purple, brown and grey. But the circular center of that window glows black as the eye of Todash. (As many scholars have noted, the color scheme of the Tower's oriel window was the prototype for the colors of those notorious seeing spheres known as Maerlyn's Rainbow.)

The Tower's door is crafted from a giant piece of steel-banded black ghostwood. Although the Dark Tower appears to be constructed from gray stone, legend has it that this stone is actually hardened flesh, and that the Tower, Beams, and roses are but one living, self-sustaining entity. Just as the Tower is believed to be the body of Gan, the first being to rise out of the primordial Prim, so the roses and Beams are believed to be a living, singing force field that emanates from his body.



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